

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 1385

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TAGS: PINT, MX

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CARLOS MADRAZO PINTADO

1. CARLOS MADRAZO IS THE SON OF THE LATE PRI PRESIDENT WHOSE ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE PRIMARY ELECTIONS WITHIN THE PRI IN 1965 RESULTED IN HIS OUSTER TEN MONTHS LATER. MADRAZO BECAME A POLITICAL MAVERICK WHO MAY HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO FORM A NEW POLITICAL PARTY WHEN HE DIED IN AN AIRPLANE ACCIDENT IN 1969. MANY MEXICANS STILL BELIEVE MADRAZO'S DEATH INVOLVED FOUL PLAY.

2. MADRAZO PINTADO WE HAVE ALWAYS JUDGED TO HAVE MORE CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL BELIEFS. HE SERVED AS HEAD OF ONE OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT'S SIXTEEN POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS 1970-1973, AFTER WHICH HE WAS ELECTED TO A FEDERAL DEPUTY SEAT. WHEN THE REPORTING OFFICER MET HIM IN JANUARY 1975, HE WAS A PURE "ECHEVERRISTA", WARMLY SUPPORTIVE OF PRESIDENTIAL POLICY AND INITIATIVES AND CONFIDENT IN PRESIDENT'S GOOD INTENTIONS TO OPEN UP THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

3. AT A BREAKFAST MEETING JAN 23, MADRAZO COULD NOT HAVE PRESENTED A MORE STRIKING CONTRAST:

A) ON ECHEVERRIA: MADRAZO SAID HE HAD COMPLETELY LOST FAITH IN ECHEVERRIA. HE WAS "HALF CRAZY" AND "SICK WITH POWER." ECHEVERRIA HAD MADE SOUNDINGS ABOUT PROLONGING HIS TERM OF OFFICE WHICH HAD MET TOTAL RESISTANCE, CAUSING HIM RELUCTANTLY TO ABANDON THE IDEA. HE MAY ALSO HAVE TINKERED WITH THE IDEA

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OF FORMING HIS OWN PARTY OF "SOCIAL DEMOCRACY", BUT MADRAZO

WAS LESS SURE OF THIS. MADRAZO SAID ECHEVERRIA'S PROFESSIONS OF LOVE FOR HIS FELLOW MAN COULD NOT BE BELIEVED WHEN HE TREATED HIS CLOSEST SUPPORTERS AND COLLABORATORS SO CRUELLY. "HE TREATS THEM LIKE SCUM AND DIRT" -- HE CITED MOYA PALENCIA, CERVANTES DEL RIO, BIEBRICH AND RABASA AS THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES.

B) ON THE TRANSITION OF POWER: IN RESPONSE TO MADRAZO'S QUESTION, EMBOFF SAID JLP SEEMED A CAUTIOUS CANDIDATE. MADRAZO AGREED WHOLEHEARTEDLY SAYING JLP WOULD REMAIN "GREY, GREY, GREY" RIGHT UP UNTIL HE TOOK OFFICE. THERE WAS ACTUAL "FEAR" IN THE LOPEZ PORTILLO CAMP. NONETHELESS MADRAZO OPINED THAT THE POINT OF GREATEST DANGER HAD PASSED AND HE SEEMED FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT JLP WOULD TAKE OFFICE NEXT DECEMBER 1. "BUT YOU WON'T SEE THE REAL LOPEZ PORTILLO UNTIL DECEMBER", HE CONCLUDED.

C) ON THE VIABILITY OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM: IMPLICITLY ASSUMING THAT THE PRESENT SYSTEM WAS ONE WHICH BOUGHT STABILITY BY PROVIDING SUFFICIENT GOVERNMENTAL AND POLITICAL POSITIONS TO THE POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS, MADRAZO SAID IT HAD WORKED FINE FOR A POPULATION OF 20, 30, AND EVEN 40 MILLION. BUT IT WAS NOT AND COULD NOT WORK FOR A POPULATION OF 60 MILLION AND UPWARDS. THE POLITICALLY AWARE AND AMBITIOUS POPULATION NOW FAR EXCEEDED AVAILABLE POSITIONS. THE EXTANT SYSTEM IMPLICITLY WAS DESIGNED FOR A POLITICALLY UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY. WHILE MEXICO STILL LACKED POLITICAL MATURITY, THERE NOW EXISTED A LARGE POPULATION OF YOUNG MEXICANS DISSATISFIED WITH MEXICAN POLITICAL PRACTICE. CONSEQUENTLY, THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE THE DECISIVE ONE FOR MEXICO. EITHER THERE WOULD DEVELOP A REAL TWO PARTY SYSTEM OR ONE OF TWO THINGS WOULD HAPPEN: POLITICAL VIOLENCE OR WHOLESALE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED EMIGRATION. MADRAZO SAID HE WAS EDUCATING HIS TWO YOUNG CHILDREN IN CANADIAN SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE THEM THE OPTION OF LEAVING MEXICO IF THAT WAS THEIR CHOICE. ALTHOUGH MADRAZO WAS VAGUE AS TO HOW THE CHANGE HE THOUGHT NECESSARY MIGHT COME ABOUT, HE DID SAY A SECOND PARTY WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM THE RANKS OF THE PRI, AND WOULD HAVE TO FORM AROUND A LEADER OF NATIONAL STATURE. UNFORTUNATELY, HE SAW NO SUCH PERSON ON THE POLITICAL HORIZON, "PERHAPS

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CARLOS HANK GONZALEZ" HE SAID WITHOUT CONVICTION.

D) ON HIS FATHER'S DEATH: THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS FATHER'S PLANE CRASH PROVIDED NO CONCRETE REASON TO SUSPECT FOUL PLAY. BUT KNOWING WHAT HE NOW KNEW, HE COULD NOT DISCARD THE POSSIBILITY THAT HIS FATHER HAD BEEN MURDERED.

E) ON HIS POLITICAL FUTURE: HE WAS WORKING IN THE CAMPAIGN WITH PEDRO RAMIREZ VAZQUEZ, PRI SECRETARY OF PRESS. HE HAD BEEN A STUDENT OF LOPEZ PORTILLO AND THEREFORE KNEW HIM PERSONALLY, BUT FORESAW NO IMPORTANT ROLE FOR HIMSELF IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.

F) ON US-MEXICAN RELATIONS: UNDER LOPEZ PORTILLO, US-MEXICAN RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE. MADRAZO COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE US HAD BEEN SO RESTRAINED IN THE FACE OF SO MANY PROVOCATIONS FROM ECHEVERRIA. "NORMALLY WHEN SOMEONE GETS HIT, THEY HIT BACK". MADRAZO SUPPOSED WE HAD GOOD REASON FOR NOT HAVING COUNTERATTACKED. LOPEZ PORTILLO HAD MORE INNER AND GENUINE SELF-CONFIDENCE AND LESS POLITICAL AMBITION THAN ECHEVERRIA AND WOULD NOT FEEL THE NEED TO BE SO BELLIGERENT.

4. COMMENT: EMBOFF DOES NOT KNOW MADRAZO WELL AND MAY HAVE CAUGHT HIM IN A PARTICULARLY PESSIMISTIC MOMENT. HE SEEMED EAGER TO BLOW OFF A LOT OF STEAM WITH AN OUTSIDER; BUT EVEN ALLOWING FOR SOME PERSONAL PROBLEM OR INFLUENCE ON HIM, WHAT HE HAD TO SAY WAS SURPRISING IN ITS EXTREMITY.
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